

BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM STANDARDS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Meeting of April 4, 2011

Open Session

Voting Members Present :(2) Shelley Cortese, RIDOC/Chair; Elaine Bucci, RI District Court

Seats Not Represented :(8) RI District Court; Urban League; RI Police Chief's Association; RI Supreme Court; RI Department of Health; Office of the Attorney General; Governor's Office; RI Justice Commission; Anthony Ward Smith, Justice Assistance; Mary Osborne, BIP representative; Elaine Dorazio, Supreme Court.

Additional Participants: (4) Bryan Riley, FVI; Jessica Seitz, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence; George Sheehan, RI BIP; Anita Corley, EBCC.

Materials Distributed:

Meeting Agenda-April 4, 2011

Meeting Minutes-February 7, 2010

Summary of Batterers Intervention Program Monitoring for Renewed Comprehensive Certification

Shelley Cortese, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order.

Review of Minutes

Minutes of the February 7, 2011 meeting were reviewed.

Member Issues/Discussion/Announcements

There was discussion about whether or not it would be better to have the Judges make the referrals for the Batterers Intervention for Repeat Offenders program or should the Probation and Parole officers do their own assessments to make the referrals themselves.

Judge Bucci thought it should be up to the Probation and Parole officers to make that decision about who would need a referral. She believes they would know best as far as the offender's history is concerned. She also explained how many Judges have no way of knowing whether or not the offender was a repeat offender unless it was brought to their attention and so it would make it difficult to know when a referral for the program should be made.

Shelley thought it would be easier to have Judges make the referral to avoid any complication if an offender were to be violated for non-compliance with the program. At this time, a decision was made

that Probation and Parole will make the referrals as they find necessary.

There were concerns about labeling the program as “Repeat Offenders” and changing it to “High Risk Offenders”. The program wouldn’t necessarily be specifically for repeat offenders only. The program would be used for those more serious Domestic Violence cases regardless if it was the offenders first time with a Domestic Violence charge/charges. It would be up to the Probation and Parole Officer to determine whether or not the offender needed a more intense program based on his/her case.

Currently the program will be used for Providence cases only. Judge Bucci questioned whether or not it was plausible to expand the program for more than just those Providence cases. A discussion followed with the idea of having a Probation officer in the Providence calendar so they could have the opportunity to make suggestions to the Judge to refer an offender to the program. It would also help enforce the program by having a Probation Officer in the courtroom to speak to prosecutors about repeat offenders.

Bryan Riley explained how the program would be more intense. Offenders are required to attend all sessions with no absences. Offenders would also be required to visit their Probation and Parole officer at least once a week. The process would be much more orientated and there would be a lot more communication between the

facilitators and the offenders. Group sizes would be much smaller than usual to allow for more participation within the group.

Judge Bucci agreed that having smaller groups will allow offenders to become more comfortable and more able to be open and participate in groups.

Micheline Lombardi and Bryan Riley will meet to talk about what will work as far as the referrals are concerned for the program.

Upcoming Meetings

Review Subcommittee:

Thursday, May 19, 2011 @ 2:00pm at the Dix Building/2nd Floor Conference Room

DV Critical Case Review Team:

To be determined

Oversight Committee:

To be determined

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00.

Respectfully Submitted,

Crystal Baptista, Probation & Parole